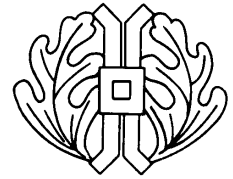


PREVENTIVE LAW SERIES

LEGAL READINESS



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It is a fact of military life that servicemembers can be ordered to deploy or change their duty stations on very short notice. If you get orders to deploy or change duty stations next week, which require you to travel a great distance, you should be "legally ready." Legal Readiness refers to having your personal legal affairs in order.

WHAT FOLLOWS BELOW ARE A FEW SUGGESTIONS TO BECOME LEGALLY READY. OF COURSE, THERE ARE SERVICEMEMBERS THAT HAVE UNIQUE SITUATIONS WHICH REQUIRE THEM TO DO OTHER THINGS ASIDE FROM WHAT IS LISTED BELOW TO BECOME LEGALLY PREPARED. DO NOT BE ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO WAITS TO THE LAST MINUTE OR, EVEN WORSE, FORGETS TO BECOME LEGALLY PREPARED.

First, you should be assured that your dependents will have an adequate and continuous amount of support while you are deployed. You can set up direct deposits or consider having joint checking and savings accounts.

Second, consider executing powers of attorney to authorize people you trust to act on your behalf. Powers of Attorney are useful documents for both married and single servicemembers. A power of attorney enables someone to pay your bills, register your car, pay your taxes, ship your household goods, and do a multitude of other things. (Please refer to the handout on Powers of Attorney)

Third, think about drafting or updating your will. (Please refer to the handout on Wills)

Fourth, think about drafting advanced medical directive documents, such as living wills and durable powers of attorney (Please refer to the handout on Advanced Medical Directives)

Fifth, ensure that your life insurance beneficiaries are up-to-date. Life insurance proceeds will NOT pass through your will because your life insurance policy is a contract between you, the insured party, and the life insurance company.

Sixth, negotiate a military clause into your rental lease so you are able to get out of your lease without paying a penalty if you get orders. In California, military clauses are NOT automatic – they must be negotiated into the lease. Likewise, the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act does not cover the breaking of leases for members already on active duty.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE APPOINTMENTS

For an appointment to see a legal assistance attorney, please contact the Legal Assistance Office, located in Building 610, Naval Air Station North Island, by telephone at (619) 545-6278.